



Freewheeling Vanpool Rewards End on October 31, 2005

To date, over 2,000 Metro vanpoolers have taken advantage of the Freewheeling vanpool offer and received MasterCard gift card rewards for becoming a new rider, driver, primary bookkeeper or recruiter since the campaign started on February 1, 2005. The campaign, sponsored by the Washington State Department of Transportation, has contributed to the growth of the Metro vanpool program by encouraging more commuters to join a vanpool.

If you have registered for a gift card and not received it, don't despair. We are still processing many of the requests. You can obtain more information about Freewheeling by visiting RideshareOnline.com and selecting the Freewheeling link or by calling 206-625-4500.

Metro Vanpoolers — Real People Doing Amazing Things

Vanpooler Postponed Commuting to Help Animals in Louisiana

Like many vanpoolers, Kathy Shaw watched the news reports about the survivors of Hurricane Katrina and worried about the animals left behind. She donated money to Pasado Safe Haven, a Seattle-based animal advocacy organization that has been working in Louisiana since the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. After learning about the organization, Kathy realized she wanted to do more to help the animals. She decided to take a leave from

her job at Seattle Cancer Care Alliance and buy a plane ticket to assist with the animal rescues.

Kathy flew out on September 18th and arrived in Raceland, Louisiana where she spent the next two and half weeks caring for animals rescued from Hurricane Katrina. Pasado relocated to Raceland a week prior to her arrival to a large barn about 30 miles southwest of New Orleans where they operated a triage facility. Kathy chose to stay behind and take care of the animals while other volunteers were out searching for abandoned and declining animals to bring back to Raceland. As the animals arrived, the veterinarians would check each animal to give them the appropriate shots and needed medical attention.

Kathy spent most of her 15-hour day walking and feeding the dogs. After a week, Kathy was reassigned to managing the cats and in two days the population grew from 14 to 54 rescued cats. Pasado organized the effort to reunite the animals with their owners or place them in a foster family.

When Kathy arrived in Raceland, a family volunteered their house so Kathy could crash after working a long day at the barn. Soon the news of Hurricane Rita was announced and the family decided to evacuate so Kathy spent several nights in the barn listening to the stormy weather created by Hurricane Rita.



Kathy Shaw and rescued kitten, Lenore.

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King County

METRO

VANPOOL

Cash Rewards for Vanpoolers during Downtown Seattle Tunnel Closure

The Downtown Seattle Tunnel closed on September 24th for two years while rails are installed and other retrofitting is done as part of Sound Transit's Light Rail project. The tunnel will re-open to bus service in September, 2007, and trains will begin operating in 2009. To mitigate the impact of the tunnel closure, great cash rewards are being offered to commuters coming into Downtown Seattle and the International District.

Visa Gift Card rewards include:

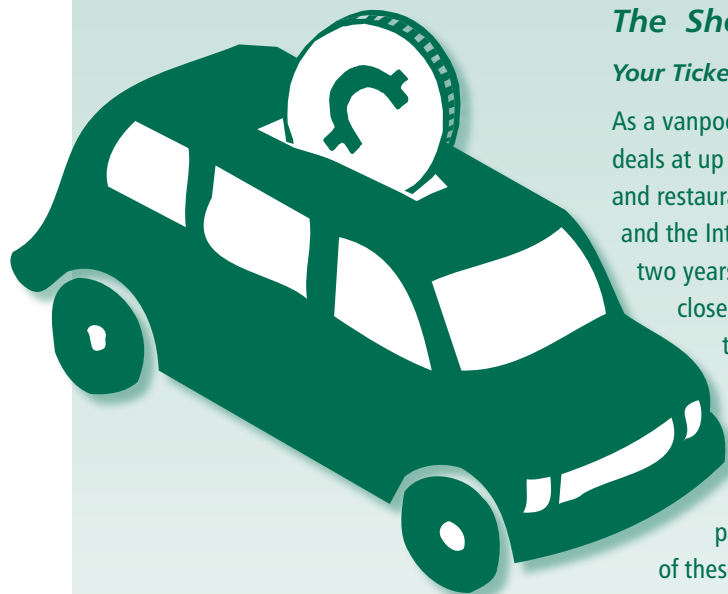
- \$20 to new registrants on RideshareOnline.com
- \$150 to new vanpool drivers
- \$150 to new primary bookkeepers
- \$100 to new vanpool riders

These incentives provide vanpool groups great tools to increase ridership. For more information, call 206-625-4500.

Available to all vanpoolers: The Shop, Dine & Ride Guide

Your Ticket to Downtown Seattle Deals

As a vanpool participant you qualify to receive deals at up to 80 participating shops, theaters and restaurants throughout Downtown Seattle and the International District during the two years the Downtown Tunnel will be closed. To receive the Guide go online to www.shopdineride.org. To redeem coupons from the Guide at participating businesses, simply show a valid transit pass. FlexPasses and Metro/Vanpool passes qualify. If you do not have one of these, please call 206-625-4500 and we will send you a special Vanpool Pass to use.



Redmond Rewards Vanpooling Residents

Who do you know that lives in Redmond? Friends, relatives, co-workers? You can help them get a better commute just like yours!

The City of Redmond's *Get In Motion* program is encouraging Redmond residents to walk, cycle, vanpool or carpool to school, work and activities. Those who live within the city limits of Redmond and commute to destinations outside Redmond can now receive special rewards for vanpooling with the RSVP vanpool payment card. The RSVP card is available to new vanpoolers living in Redmond who have

not been in a publicly-sponsored vanpool in the past three months. Through the RSVP card these new riders will receive \$50 toward their vanpool fare every month for six months in addition to any subsidy they receive from their employers. Eligible new vanpoolers can register for their \$300 RSVP reward by going to GoRTRIP.com and completing a RSVP Vanpool Incentive participation form within one month of joining a vanpool. No internet access? New riders can contact Crystal Vernor at 425-702-8001 X 204 to register or get more details.

VanPool Voices to go Electronic

Beginning in 2006 you will be receiving your VanPool Voices newsletter by email. The purpose of this change is to reduce the cost to the vanpool program. We will still be providing you all the information and stories you are used to receiving. If we do not have your email address in our Rideshare office and you would like to receive the Voices newsletter, contact Collette by email at collette.fidecaro@metrokc.gov or by phone at 206-684-1541.

**Coming
Soon**

A Gift Card for Your Opinions?

In the next couple of months, King County Metro Vanpool will be asking for your opinions through a User Survey. This survey will be Internet-based and we will email you a link, password and PIN. All vanpoolers that complete the survey will be entered into a drawing for a Visa Gift Card — so make sure your email address is current with your Vanpool Services Representative!



Less Pain at the Pump for Vanpoolers

Metro's VanPool program is seeing a huge boost in business due in no small part to the increasing rise in gas prices. It's getting very painful at the pump and more commuters than ever are turning to vanpool for relief.

As an example, compare Puget Sound's average gas price of \$2.00 a gallon one year ago with today's prices of about \$2.78 a gallon. That's about an extra \$40 dollars a month for the average commuter! What's more, prices are predicted to keep inching upwards with some analysts looking for \$4.00 a gallon next year.

Commuting in a Metro VanPool protects commuters from those price fluctuations since gas is included in the monthly fare. And, many employers provide substantial subsidies for vanpoolers adding even more savings to the mix. Not to mention the fact that, by using a vanpool, VanPool commuters help conserve fuel thereby helping to keep those higher prices in check.

Once again, VanPool proves to be a winning combination that benefits the commuter directly and helps address environmental concerns at the same time.

Next time you fill up your van...

In an effort to streamline the preventive maintenance scheduling for your van, we ask that drivers pay particular attention to entering correct odometer readings when prompted at the fuel pump.

If it would help, record the van's odometer reading when you pull into the gas station, before turning off the ignition, so you will have the reading when you are prompted for it. Feel free to purchase a small notebook to record your odometer number. King County Metro will reimburse you for the notebook expense when you submit the receipt with your Monthly Report.



From left to right: Kristen Smith, Rachel Levy, Lorrie Scott, Lisa Hystad, Bob Okrie, Shawn Baldwin, Christine Vogeler.

REI Vanpool #1752 (sent to us via email)

Hello Metro!

I wanted to extend a big THANK YOU for our new van! We've been enjoying it for a month now, and have had a few celebrations I thought you should know about, and a few pictures too. We were so excited to make our very first trip in the new van. To celebrate on the ride home, a van member made "hats" for us to wear. She designed these herself with a little picture of a vanpool which we all colored on during the ride home. We wore the hats the whole trip home, and had fun pulling up next to another REI vanpool at a stoplight to show off our hats. The hats now decorate the van and truth be told, we wear the hats now and then. You'll notice we're wearing our hats in the photo above.

Within the first week of having our new van, we had a "Tail Gate Party" — we threw open the back doors of the van, blasted van tunes, and had a party during the noon hour in the REI parking lot! We picnicked on a table just outside the back of the van, and grilled steak kabobs on a little grill. We also had a piñata! We hung the piñata off the bike rack & blindfolded one of our riders; it took a whole lotta swings to break the piñata (which was an REI shopping bag full of candy & REI stickers & a few City of Kent vanpool prizes) because the stick was dried wood, really lightweight so not to damage the van of course. We even put up signs on the van "I love Vanpooling" and "Way-Cool Van-Pool". We drew lots of attention and therefore publicity for vanpooling. We hope to do this again before the summer is over, and might even have the vanpool parked next to us join us.

Here's to a great Metro program and a big thank you from your #1 REI Vanpool!

— **Shawn Baldwin, bookkeeper**



*VanShare participants
at ER Solutions*

A Solution for ER Solutions

A new commuter product offered by King County called VanShare has come to the aid of a Renton employer and its employees. ER Solutions, a company based in Renton recently relocated its business operations which affected the commute of many of its workers. Their commute by bus to the Renton Transit Center and a short walk to work was no longer feasible after the company move. As with most business relocations, a shift in commute modes often is necessary. In many cases that means switching from riding public transportation to driving to work alone. The result is a more expensive commute, added congestion, and added stress on employee parking facilities. In some cases it can even lead to workers seeking other employment. To address this problem ER Solutions turned to VanShare.

VanShare is an inexpensive commute option that is the missing piece in the commute puzzle. It provides the link to and from a transit center or hub. That link can be from your home to the transit hub or from the transit hub to your employment site. With a small fleet of VanShare vehicles ER Solutions was able to provide the opportunity for its employees who had formerly taken the bus to work before the business relocation to continue it after the relocation. At the end of the day each group parks their van at the transit Center leaving it there for the next days use. Now its the usual bus ride and a short vanship ride to work for ER Solutions transit riders. "It's something we had been wanting to do for a long time" said a company representative. "It's solves our problem, we get our employees to work on time and it keeps the bus option open for our workers".

To learn more about VanShare, phone us at 206-625-4500 or visit our website at: <http://transit.metrokc.gov/tops/van-car/vanship.html>.

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When the animals were reunited with their owners, many owners expressed appreciation and gratitude. Most of the owners thought they would be leaving their pets for just three days so they were gratified when weeks later they were reunited with their dog or cat. Pasado rescued a variety of animals including cats, dogs, birds, snakes, lizards, rabbits and gerbils. Pasado has rescued over 800 animals and provided shelter and medical assistance until they can be reunited with their owners or taken to a foster home or shelter. Kathy said the Hurricane Katrina survivors were very friendly, supportive and appreciative of their effort in rescuing their animals.



Kathy has been a Metro Vanpooler and back-up driver since 1998. She lives on Vashon Island and appreciates the convenience the vanpool provides. Before vanpooling, Kathy took the bus, then transferred to the ferry and back to the bus. With vanpooling, Kathy doesn't have to worry about making the connections; she can just sit back and relax or take the driver's seat when it's her turn to drive. She said her fellow vanpool riders are all animal lovers and have many stories to share about their pets while riding in the vanpool for their ferry commute.

Along with Kathy's love for animals in Louisiana, she has five horses, two dogs and two cats on her Vashon Island property. Kathy explained that working down in Raceland with the dogs and cats was a life altering experience and she would do it over again. Kathy's attachment to the rescued animals will continue with the new additions to her family. Kathy adopted two stray cats from Louisiana, her constant companions while working at the barn in Raceland.



VanPool Voices

If you have questions, comments or story ideas, send them to: Rideshare Operations, YES-TR-0700, King County Metro, 400 Yesler Way, Seattle WA 98104, call 206-263-4445 or write cathy.blumenthal@metrokc.gov.

Alternate Formats Available

206-263-3792 TTY Relay: 711